

BOOK REVIEWS

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Anesthetic and Obstetric Management of High-risk Pregnancy. BY S. DATTA. St. Louis, Mosby Yearbook, 1991. Price: \$79.00.

Anesthetic management of the high-risk parturient woman requires knowledge of potential medical, obstetric, fetal and neonatal, and anesthetic complications that may arise in the peripartum period. This book, directed to "front-line physicians and medical caretakers of high-risk pregnancies," attempts to serve as a reference for obstetric, medical, and anesthetic management.

The text consists of 30 chapters, 28 of which were co-authored by at least two specialists, in most cases an obstetrician and an obstetric anesthesiologist. The first 4 chapters primarily involve the fetus and include monitoring, fetal diseases and abnormalities, and fetal manipulations. The last 2 chapters discuss fetal distress and intrauterine fetal death. The intervening chapters describe management of patients with a variety of medical, obstetric, and fetal problems.

For the most part, this book fulfills its objectives. Each chapter includes information about "cause, pathophysiology, and obstetric treatment" of the individual problems, as well as anesthetic management. Numerous figures and tables assist the reader with understanding specific concepts. Most of the references are current and informative. Redundancy of information, though present, has been kept to a minimum for a text this size. Although the idea of chapters co-authored by different specialists is innovative, the scope of information, which includes medical, obstetric, and anesthetic management of numerous problems, is somewhat too extensive for one text. However, because explanations of anesthetic management generally are complete, this book remains worthwhile for those who practice obstetric anesthesia.

The chapters relating to the fetus are particularly good. Discussions of placental gas exchange, fetal heart rate changes, and anesthesia for fetal distress are clinically relevant and easy to understand. These sections require no prior knowledge of the field. Chapters on genetic and metabolic disease and fetal congenital abnormalities, though well written, are of less interest to obstetric anesthesiologists.

The chapters involving medical and obstetric problems are more variable. The chapter on respiratory diseases contains a wealth of recent information as well as basic physiology. Likewise, the chapter on postpartum hemorrhage contains an excellent review of the pharmacology of oxytocic agents. In contrast, the chapter on cardiac diseases describes basic physiology well, but discussions of anesthetic management of specific cardiac diseases tend to be limited. In addition, a table of recommended protocols for lethal dysrhythmias does not agree with recent American Heart Association guidelines.

Most areas of recent controversy, such as monitoring of preeclamptic patients, anesthetic management of patients undergoing vaginal birth after cesarean section, and the use of regional anesthesia in anticoagulated or febrile patients, are presented in a balanced fashion and are discussed in detail. Some additional areas of controversy, such as the use of epinephrine in test doses for epidural anesthesia in preeclamptic patients, are not mentioned.

This book includes a number of chapters, such as those discussing the pregnant teenager, orthopedic problems, and substance abuse, that are not found commonly in similar texts. These chapters are uniformly informative and interesting for practitioners in this field.

In summary, this text contains a wealth of information important for anesthesiologists who care for high-risk parturient patients. The chapters co-authored by different specialists provide unique perspectives into the complete medical care of these patients. Since no other recent texts serve as such a complete reference, this one provides a valuable

addition to the library of anyone involved in high-risk obstetric anesthesia.

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Anesthesia. Third Edition. EDITED BY R. D. MILLER. New York, Churchill Livingstone, 1990. Pages: 2420 in two volumes, plus 155-page index in each volume. Price: \$175.00.

Few would argue that the first two editions of this textbook set a "standard" in North America for textbooks of anesthesiology. In recent years several competitors have challenged this position, most notably the single-volume *Clinical Anesthesiology* edited by P. G. Barash, B. F. Cullen, and R. K. Stoelting, published in 1989, and selling for \$99. Although the proliferation of subspecialty textbooks has made the purchase of general textbooks less appealing to some, general reference textbooks are still preferred by many residents and departmental libraries.

The authorship reads like a "who's who" in American anesthesiology, with numerous department chairmen and full professors from around the country. There are twelve more chapters than in the second edition, and the authorship has changed for many. The pages are larger than previous editions, making the text easier to use and permitting a reduction from three to two volumes without compromising "readability." The editors have been careful to space graphs and figures generously and evenly throughout the text, and we preferred the format to that of *Clinical Anesthesia*, in which the lines are more closely spaced.

Gone are the days when the resident could sit down and read a "standard" text from cover to cover as a preexamination review. Each chapter of *Anesthesia* strives to be a definitive up-to-date critical summary, written in a style compatible with scientific literature and thoroughly referenced. Reading this textbook would take the entire period of residency training; rather, it should be viewed as a "reference" textbook. This function is aided by the excellent index, repeated in full in both volumes. Our assessment of the various parts of the book, viewed from the perspectives of a resident preparing for examinations and a practicing clinician, is as follows.

The introduction to the usually intimidating subjects of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics is easily digestible; figures and equations used to explain concepts such as time constants, drug clearance, and volume of distribution are clear and easily understandable. The importance of logarithmic scales in these subjects is nicely presented in graphs showing the same data plotted side by side on linear and log scales.

The five chapters on inhaled anesthetic agents are well organized and integrated. Whereas E. I. Eger's discussion of uptake and distribution is excellent both for its clarity and clinical relevance, the section on closed-circuit anesthesia was surprisingly brief, considering the scope of the subject and the size of the book. The chapter on inhaled anesthetic delivery systems has been rewritten by a new author and now includes a detailed description of a modern anesthesia machine with excellent illustrations, providing a sound understanding of safety features as well as limitations. The detailed description of the copper kettle vaporizer, which appears in the second edition, has been deleted (at last!).